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ABSTRACT

This publication explores issues related to Africa. It examines the U.S. response to the Barbary pirate states (Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli) in the early 19th century; the current AIDS crisis in Africa; and 14th century Mali and other Islamic lands through the eyes of Ibn Battuta, who traveled throughout the Muslim world. Each article provides student activities for writing and discussion. The Postscript section contains one lesson from "America Responds to Terrorism," a frequently updated feature of the Constitutional Rights Foundation's Web site. (BT)

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Africa

Carlton Martz

The Bill of Rights in Action v18 n1 Winter 2001

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The United States and the Barbary Pirates

The American Revolution was barely over before the United States faced its first foreign policy test. What should the United States do about North African pirate states that plundered American shipping?

On September 11, 2001, terrorists struck the United States, killing about 5,000 people. The U.S. president had to decide how to respond. He decided to declare a war on terrorism. He got Congress to authorize using force against any nation, organization, or person involved in the attack or against any nation harboring the terrorist organizations.

In 1804, U.S. warships bombarded Tripoli, a kingdom whose pirates frequently attacked American ships. (Library of Congress)

When the United States began, it faced another foreign policy test: How should it respond to the Barbary pirates who were plundering its ships?

In the 1700s, the countries along the southern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea were called the Barbary States. They included Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. Named after the Berbers, one of North Africa's native peoples, the Barbary States were little pirate kingdoms that plundered the merchant ships of many nations.

U S HISTORY

The Barbary pirates were mostly Berbers, Arabs, and other Muslims, but some came from Christian Europe. The pirates used small, fast-moving vessels to capture trading ships and their cargoes. They held the crews and passengers for ransom or sold them as slaves.

Each of the four Barbary States had its own ruler. He was usually a military strongman who had grabbed the throne by assassinating the ruler or murdering rival family members.

In 1662, England made the first treaty with a Barbary ruler. This set the pattern for similar treaties by other European nations trading in the Mediterranean. Typically, a Barbary peace treaty required a nation to pay "tribute" to the pirate ruler, who would then call off attacks on the nation's ships. Tribute usually took the form of a large payment of money plus annual payments. The annual payments might be cash, military supplies, or expensive presents for the ruler. A particular treaty might also include ransom money for the release of a nation's citizens held captive by the Barbary country.

(Continued on next page)

Africa

This *Bill of Rights in Action* explores issues related to Africa. The first article examines the United States' response to the Barbary pirates in the early 19th century. The second article explores the current AIDS crisis in Africa. The final article looks at 14th century Mali and other Islamic lands through the eyes of Ibn Battuta, who traveled throughout the Muslim world. Also, Postscript contains one of the many lessons from America Responds to Terrorism, a constantly updated feature on our web site at **www.crf-usa.org**.

U.S. History: The United States and the Barbary Pirates

Current Issues: AIDS in Africa

World History: Ibn Battuta: The Greatest Traveler in the Middle Ages

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The Barbary rulers frequently demanded that nations "renew" their treaties for even greater amounts of tribute. Until a nation agreed to new terms, its ships remained fair game for the pirates.

The war fleets of the European powers could easily have defeated the Barbary pirate ships. Yet the Europeans agreed to the tribute treaties. Nations like England believed that by paying tribute they not only bought protection for themselves but also redirected the pirates to wreak havoc on the merchant ships of competing nations.

The American colonies traded extensively in the Mediterranean before the Revolutionary War. During this time, British tribute treaties with the Barbary States protected American ships. But after the colonies broke away from England, this protection vanished. Many British believed that the Barbary pirates would eliminate American commercial competition in the Mediterranean. One British official gloated, "The Americans cannot protect themselves. They cannot pretend to [have] a navy."

The U.S. Pays Tribute

After finding American commerce in the Mediterranean had almost stopped due to the pirates, the Continental Congress agreed in 1784 to negotiate treaties with the four Barbary States. Congress appointed a special commission, consisting of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, to oversee the negotiations. The following year, Congress authorized a maximum of $80,000 to spend on tribute treaties with all the Barbary States.

In 1787, the United States signed a tribute treaty with Morocco. This proved to be a reasonable treaty, costing the United States a one-time only tribute of about $20,000. Except for a few brief disagreements, Morocco never again harassed American shipping.

Algiers, the most powerful of the Barbary States, was a different story. In the summer of 1785, pirates from Algiers captured two American merchant ships and held the 21 men aboard them for ransom. The United States offered $4,200 for the captives. The ruler of Algiers, called the dey, demanded nearly $60,000. The Americans refused, and negotiations dragged on for more than 10 years.

The two commissioners most involved in tribute treaty negotiations were John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Adams favored paying tribute as the cheapest way to get American commerce moving again in the Mediterranean. Jefferson disagreed. He saw no end to the demands for tribute. He wanted matters settled "through the medium of war" and proposed a league of trading nations to force the end of Barbary piracy.

In 1790, pirates from Algiers captured 11 American ships and more than 100 prisoners to add to those already held for ransom. This shocking news produced a serious debate in the newly formed U.S. Congress over the need to build a navy. But it took five years before Congress authorized the construction of six warships.

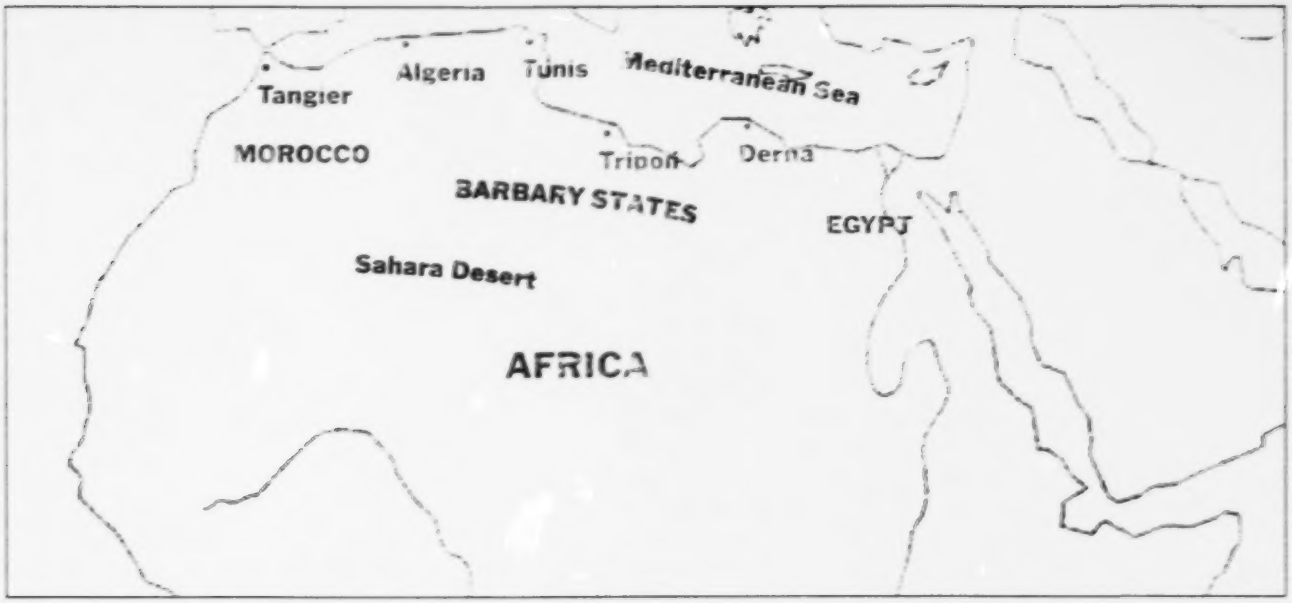
Finally, in 1796, the United States signed a peace treaty with Algiers. The United States agreed to pay $642,500 plus annual tribute of naval supplies and presents to the dey. In exchange, the dey promised to release the American captives and protect American shipping. The United States had to borrow money to make the primary tribute payment.

Trouble with Tripoli and Tunis

Over the next two years, the United States negotiated similar tribute treaties with Tripoli and Tunis. The treaties with these countries cost a total of $160,000 plus supplies and presents to the Barbary rulers. William Eaton, a former U.S. Army officer who became the American consul (diplomatic representative) at Tunis, disliked the Barbary tribute system. He wrote that "there is no access to the permanent friendship of these states without paving the way with gold or cannonballs; and the proper question is which method is preferable."

Before long, the rulers of Tripoli and Tunis complained about delays in the delivery of the annual tribute supplies. The ruler of Tripoli, the pasha, demanded a new treaty with a much larger tribute. Meanwhile, the U.S. ambassador to England scrambled to gather expensive presents owed to the pasha of Tunis. One of the gifts was a pair of pistols mounted with gold and set with diamonds.

In May 1801, the pasha of Tripoli canceled his treaty with the United States and declared war on American shipping. Even before he knew that Tripoli had declared war, newly inaugurated President Jefferson ordered a naval squadron of four warships to the Mediterranean. But this squadron did not accomplish much. Nor did a second one sent the following year.



The Barbary States consisted of Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli.

U.S. Navy ships did blockade Tripoli harbor, but only for a short time.

Frustrated by the timidity and even incompetence of the U.S. Navy squadron commanders, William Eaton started to work on a plot to overthrow Yusuf Karamanli, the pasha of Tripoli. To seize the throne for himself, Yusuf had murdered his older brother and forced another one, Hamet, into exile. Eaton contacted Hamet and promised him U.S. support in overthrowing his brother. Eaton believed that once on the throne of Tripoli, Hamet would repay the United States with permanent peaceful relations.

War with Tripoli

A new naval squadron under Commodore Edward Preble arrived in the Mediterranean in 1803. Preble aggressively restored the blockade of Tripoli harbor. But one of Preble's warships, the *Philadelphia*, ran aground while chasing a Tripolitan vessel. The Tripoli pirates captured more than 300 U.S. Navy officers and crew and imprisoned them. Pasha Yusuf now demanded $3 million for peace and the ransom of the American captives.

Commodore Preble realized that he could not leave the *Philadelphia* (a frigate with 36 cannons) in the hands of the Tripoli pirates. Fearful that retaking the ship under Tripoli's harbor guns would be too risky, Preble decided to destroy the frigate instead. Lieutenant Stephen Decatur and about 70 officers, sailors, and marines volunteered for what became one of the most heroic actions in the history of the U.S. Navy.

On the night of February 16, 1804, the 25-year-old Decatur and his men boldly sailed a captured pirate vessel next to the *Philadelphia* in Tripoli harbor. The Americans quickly boarded the ship, overwhelmed the Tripoli pirates guarding it, and set the frigate on fire. Decatur and all his men then escaped aboard their vessel without any casualties. As they sailed out of the harbor, the *Philadelphia* exploded.

A few months later, Commodore Preble assembled all his warships at Tripoli and bombarded the town and its harbor fortifications. In the meantime, Jefferson ordered a new U.S. Navy squadron to go to the Barbary Coast.

Late in 1804, William Eaton started on his plan to overthrow Pasha Yusuf of Tripoli. Eaton found Yusuf's brother, Hamet, in Egypt. Eaton then recruited with his own and borrowed money an incredible "army" of Arab horsemen, soldiers of fortune, and cutthroats. Eaton, along with Hamet and a handful of American marines, led this band 500 miles across North Africa to Derna, a port town controlled by Pasha Yusuf. With the aid of three U.S. warships, Eaton and his men stormed the town on April 27, 1805, and drove out its defenders. (In honor of this victory, the words: "To the Shores of Tripoli" were put on the Marine Corps' flag and later put in the Marines' Hymn.)

(Continued on next page)

Troops sent by Yusuf arrived to besiege Derna. Much to Eaton's dismay, he received word that Pasha Yusuf had signed a peace treaty with the United States in Tripoli. This ended Eaton's plan to replace Yusuf with his brother.

The treaty of peace with Pasha Yusuf, under the guns of U.S. warships at Tripoli and Eaton's forces at Derna, disappointed many Americans. Yusuf released the prisoners from the *Philadelphia* and several American merchant ships. The United States still agreed, however, to pay $60,000 for them.

War with Algiers

Following the war with Tripoli, the United States ordered its Navy ships in the Mediterranean to return home. Conflict with England was heating up and finally exploded in the War of 1812.

By this time, a new dey, Omar, had taken over in Algiers. He ordered the capture of American merchant ships because of overdue U.S. tribute. President Madison responded by getting Congress to authorize military action against Algiers in February 1815. He sent a squadron of nine warships to end Barbary tribute. Commodore Stephen Decatur (the leader of the group that set fire of the *Philadelphia* 11 years earlier) commanded the squadron.

After capturing several of the dey's pirate ships, Decatur coolly sailed into Algiers harbor on June 29, 1815. The next day, under the threat of Decatur's warships, Dey Omar agreed to a peace treaty and the release of all American prisons without any ransom payment. In addition, Article II of the treaty stated, "No tribute, either as biennial presents or under any other form shall ever be required by Algiers from the United States on any pretext." Then in an unprecedented act, the Americans demanded that Dey Omar pay the United States $10,000 as compensation for property taken from its citizens. Decatur sailed on to Tunis and Tripoli, where he won similar concessions.

About a year later, Dey Omar wrote to President Madison, proposing a renewal of the tribute treaty the United States had signed with Algiers in 1796. Madison wrote back that "the United States, whilst they wish for war with no nation, will buy peace with none." He concluded that it was the "settled policy" of the United States "that as peace is better than war, war is better than tribute."

For Discussion and Writing

1. Why did the European powers go along with paying tribute to the Barbary States?
2. What effect did the Barbary wars have on U.S. military defense?
3. Do you agree or disagree with President Madison that "war is better than tribute"? Why?
4. What are some similarities and differences between the conflict with the Barbary States and America's current campaign against terrorism?

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A C T V I T Y

Is Paying Ransom Ever Right?

Divide the class into five groups. Each group should discuss one of the ransom scenarios described below. Each group will decide whether the U.S. government should pay the ransom demanded in the scenario. Finally, the groups should report their decisions and reasoning to the rest of the class.

Ransom Scenarios

A. A nation at war with the United States demands $1 million for each of its 1,000 American prisoners of war.

B. A nation hostile to the United States shoots down an American spy plane, killing all the crew. The country demands $50 million for the return of the dead airmen.

C. A violent mob surrounds American diplomats in a U.S. embassy. The country where this is taking place demands military weapons in exchange for protecting the diplomats.

D. A group of desperate terrorists has captured a civilian airliner in flight with men, women, and children aboard. The terrorists demand $100 million deposited in a Swiss bank account or they will crash the aircraft.

E. A radical American organization threatens to blow up a federal building in a major city unless certain federal prisoners are released.

AIDS in Africa

The worldwide AIDS epidemic has already caused more deaths than the bubonic plague of the Middle Ages. Three-quarters of the AIDS cases and deaths today are taking place in Africa.

A volunteer in Zambia assists a local woman who provides health information on AIDS . Each year about 25,000 Zambian children are infected with HIV before birth or from breast feeding. (UN Photo)

About 22 million people in the world, including more than a million children, have died of AIDS since the epidemic began in the early 1980s. Currently, the AIDS virus has infected 37 million individuals, who are likely to die because of its effects. The AIDS epidemic is most prominent in southern and eastern Africa, where about a quarter of the population is infected.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV is transmitted through blood or other bodily fluid from an infected person. When HIV enters the body, it attacks the immune system, gradually weakening it. Diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) then overwhelm the weakened immune system. These secondary or so-called "opportunistic infections" actually cause the death of AIDS victims.

CURRENT ISSUES

Unlike most other deadly diseases, such as the bubonic plague, AIDS takes a long time to kill. After a person is infected with the AIDS virus, he or she will not start to suffer the effects of "opportunistic infections" for another six to 10 years. Once this occurs, however, death usually follows in a year or so. Powerful drugs, called antiretrovirals, can help an AIDS victim live longer. But they do not kill HIV. There is no cure for AIDS yet.

HIV is one of the few viruses that have "crossed over" from an animal species to humans. Scientists believe that HIV originated in African monkeys or chimpanzees. They speculate that sometime in the 1930s the infected blood of one of these animals entered an open wound on an African hunter. The virus then spread slowly from person to person through sexual contact. The virus remained isolated in remote areas of Africa until the 1980s, when improved transportation and increased human migration caused the virus to spread rapidly throughout Africa and the world.

The most common way for HIV to be spread is through sexual contact. In some places, like the United States, the majority of cases result from male homosexual relations. Most cases worldwide, however, are spread through heterosexual intercourse. HIV is also spread through infected blood transfusions, use of infected drug or tattoo needles, and, rarely, in contact sports like boxing. In addition, mothers may pass the virus on to their babies during pregnancy or by breast-feeding. The best way to prevent HIV infections is to avoid risky behaviors like unprotected sex and drug abuse.

About 28 million Africans are currently living with HIV/AIDS. All may die of AIDS within the next decade. Why has the AIDS epidemic become so severe in Africa, and what can be done about it?

Why Africa?

Many African countries south of the Sahara Desert are very poor. To survive, workers often must travel long distances across national borders to find work. For example, a man may leave his wife in Botswana to work in a diamond mine in South Africa. For months, he lives in a dormitory at the mine. He begins to sleep with women, some of whom are infected with HIV. He refuses to use a condom, which many African males disdain as "unmanly." When he finally returns home,

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he is infected with HIV and may not even know it. When he has sex with his wife, he passes the HIV to her. If she later becomes pregnant, she is likely to pass on the virus to her baby. In a very real sense, all three are doomed.

Most women in south and east African countries have low social status, few rights, and traditionally submit to male demands such as having sex without a condom. Also, many males with HIV/AIDS persist in believing that if they sleep with one or more virgins, they will be cured.

About 28 million Africans are currently living with HIV/AIDS. All may die of AIDS within the next decade.

African societies have strong cultural and religious taboos against openly discussing matters related to sex. This makes it difficult for health clinics, schools, and the media to educate the people about how to prevent AIDS. Until recently, most African countries have been in denial about the AIDS epidemic.

AIDS Infects Society

AIDS in Africa infects not only millions of individuals, but also society itself. The stigma of AIDS causes many victims to hide their illness for fear of losing a job or being shunned by relatives and neighbors. Moreover, the relentless funerals of those who have died of AIDS sap the will of the living to have hope for the future.

It is the young, the strong, and the most productive members of society who are most often struck down by AIDS. Due to the epidemic, many African countries are suffering from the loss of farmers, skilled industrial workers, teachers, health professionals, business owners, government employees, and university students.

The epidemic in Africa is also producing millions of orphans whose parents have died from AIDS. These orphans have overwhelmed African families, who traditionally take in the children of relatives who have died. Consequently, "child-headed" households and homeless "street children" are becoming much more common in African societies.

"Raise the Alarm Loudly"

African countries have responded in different ways to the AIDS epidemic. Zambia, with 100,000 AIDS deaths and 25 percent of its people infected with HIV, has done little. It doesn't even provide HIV/AIDS awareness education. Uganda, which has a sad, violent history, is the surprising success story of Africa in combating AIDS.

Twenty years ago, Uganda started an HIV/AIDS prevention campaign. It consisted of sex education in the schools and an improved health care system. Uganda President Yoweri Museveni has said, "When a lion comes to your village, you must raise the alarm loudly." As a result, HIV infections have dropped from 15 to 8 percent of the population.

South Africa has a large population that is relatively well educated and economically well off compared with the rest of Africa. Yet, HIV has infected 20 percent of its people. South Africa could lose more than 6 million of its citizens to AIDS by 2010. After democracy replaced the racist apartheid system in South Africa, the people were much freer to travel. Tragically, this increased mobility helped spread the AIDS virus to all races, classes, occupations, and locations in South Africa.

The response of the South African government has been mixed. Prevention information is widely available, but the government has been slow to approve certain anti-AIDS drugs. One of these drugs reduces the chance of a mother passing HIV to her baby. President Thabo Mbeki has even publicly doubted that HIV causes AIDS.

In 1997, South Africa passed a law that allowed importing generic antiretroviral drugs that can prolong the lives of AIDS victims. These generic drugs are much cheaper ($600 per person per year) than the antiretrovirals originally developed and now sold by American and European companies ($10,000–$15,000 per person per year).

In March 2001, the American and European companies went to court in South Africa. They sued to stop the sale of generic antiretroviral dugs. The lawsuit claimed that the companies that made the generic drugs violated international patents. These patents granted the original developers of the drugs the exclusive right to own and sell them for 20 years.

Number of people by region who are infected with the AIDS virus (Source: World Health Organization)

The American and European drug companies argued that they had the right to charge high prices to recover the high cost of developing the drugs. To deny them this, they said, would take away their motivation to do further research. They explained that research will be needed to keep up with the ever-changing AIDS virus and to find a cure for AIDS itself. The companies also pointed out that generics sometimes have safety and quality problems.

After many protest demonstrations against the American and European drug companies, they withdrew their lawsuit and cut their prices. At least one company has licensed a South African company to distribute its antiretroviral drugs generically. The drugs now cost from $200 to $800 per person per year in Africa.

This price cut, however, will not solve the problem. Considering the huge number of people involved, AIDS prevention programs and anti-AIDS drugs cost much more than most African countries can afford. The annual health budget for the poorest African countries amounts to about $10 per person. A special U.N. session on the HIV/AIDS crisis was held in June 2001. The nations of the world set a goal of raising $7–$10 billion per year to stem the AIDS epidemic in Africa and the rest of the world.

So far, many countries, companies, and individuals have pledged money for the U.N.'s Global AIDS and Health Fund. The United States pledged $200 million, which Secretary of State Colin Powell called a down payment. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged another $100 million. Even so, the U.N. fund had pledges of only $1.4 billion by midyear 2001. Meanwhile, at a single South African funeral parlor, relatives and friends mourn 50–100 AIDS victims each week.

For Discussion and Writing

1. What causes AIDS?
2. Why has the AIDS epidemic hit Africa so hard?
3. What can African countries do to prevent new HIV infections?
4. What were the arguments, pro and con, over drug companies suing to stop the sale of generic antiretroviral dugs?

For Further Reading

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ACTIVITY

What Should the United States Do About This Crisis?

Imagine that the U.S. Department of State is holding a meeting to decide on its recommendation to the president about what to do about the AIDS crisis in Africa. The three main choices are:

A. Send unilateral foreign aid from the United States to the affected African countries.

B. Let the United Nations handle the problem and increase the U.S.'s contribution to the United Nations for this purpose.

C. Let the nations of Africa handle the problem.

Divide the class into small groups. Each group will role play a State Department meeting on the question of what to do about AIDS in Africa. Each group should do the following:

1. Discuss each of the options.
2. Add additional options if the group thinks they are necessary.
3. Vote on which option is the best.
4. Be prepared to report to the class on the option the group chose and the reasons why the group believes it is the best option.

After each group decides, have the groups report their choices to the whole class and hold a discussion. Close the activity by taking a class vote on the options.

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Ibn Battuta: The Greatest Traveler in the Middle Ages

Ibn Battuta traveled further and visited more countries than any other person in medieval times. His final journey took him to Mali, a Muslim empire in West Africa. The report of his travels reveals a vivid portrait of the Muslim world at its height.

Marco Polo was a youthful traveler from Venice who crossed Asia to visit the Mongol empire. While serving at the emperor's court, he journeyed through much of China. Twenty-four years later, he returned to Venice and attained fame by writing a book about his travels.

In 1325, the year after Marco Polo's death, another young traveler, Ibn Battuta, embarked on a tour of Asia and Africa that lasted nearly 30 years. His travels took him throughout the Islamic world. In total, he traveled an astonishing 75,000 miles, much more than Marco Polo. When he finished his journeys, he dictated his story to a scribe. His travel book provides the best eyewitness account of the diverse Muslim cultures of the 14th century.

Abu Abdallah ibn Battuta was born in 1304 in Tangier, Morocco, across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain. He came from a Muslim family of legal scholars and judges. Like them, he studied the Sharia, the sacred law of the Muslims based on the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. This prepared him to become a *qadi*, a Muslim judge.

WORLD HISTORY

In 1325, at age 21, Ibn Battuta left his parents to go on a *hajj*. This was a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy city of Islam. After traveling across North Africa to Egypt, he took a detour through Palestine and Syria.

By 1300, the Muslims had expelled the last of the Christian crusaders from the Holy Land. The end of the Crusades brought peace to the eastern Mediterranean, which greatly stimulated commerce and allowed individuals like Ibn Battuta to travel freely through the area.

In 1326, he finally reached Mecca. Somewhere along the way, he decided what he really wanted to do was to visit every part of the Muslim world and even beyond. Early on, he vowed "never to travel any road a second time."

In Timbuktu, this mosque built of mud bricks was visited by Ibn Buttuta in the 14th century. It still stands today. (Nik Wheeler CORBIS)

The World of Ibn Battuta

In Ibn Battuta's time, Dar al-Islam (The Home of Islam) extended from West Africa across North Africa to the Middle East, Persia, Central Asia, India, and the East Indies. Throughout these regions, Islam unified many different peoples with a common religion and system of law.

After Ibn Battuta studied for a while in Mecca, he left in 1328 to make his way down the Red Sea. He boarded a trading ship and sailed halfway down the east coast of Africa. Muslim merchants had established trading ports in East Africa, mainly to trade for African gold.

Ibn Battuta next traveled north through the Middle East and Persia to Russia and then eastward into Central Asia. The Mongols under Genghis Khan had conquered the Muslims in many of these regions during the mid-1200s. But by the time of Ibn Battuta's travels, a hun-

dred years later, the Mongols had settled down and were rapidly adopting Islam.

Ibn Battuta reached India in 1333. Muslim sultans (kings) ruled most of India. By now, many had heard of Ibn Battuta and his travels. The sultan of Delhi welcomed him with gifts and money, a form of hospitality that he came to expect from the rulers he visited. His fame had earned him wealth. He no longer traveled alone, but with servants and a harem.

The sultan also made him a *qadi*, a Muslim judge. He held this post for several years. When a rebellion broke out, however, the sultan grew suspicious of many around him, even of Ibn Battuta. Ibn Battuta was briefly arrested. When released, he fled Delhi. But the sultan called him back. Much to Ibn Battuta's surprise, the sultan appointed him as his ambassador to the emperor of China. He set sail for China in 1342, but was shipwrecked. He eventually arrived by sea in southern China in 1346. This was about a half-century after Marco Polo had left China.

The Mongols still ruled China when Ibn Battuta made his visit. Unlike the other areas that the Mongols had conquered, China never became a Muslim land. But Ibn Battuta did visit Muslim merchant communities in China, especially in Hangzhou, which may have been the largest city in the world at this time. He might have traveled to Peking, but never met the ruling emperor.

One last part of Dar al-Islam remained that Ibn Battuta had not visited—the West African empire of Mali. It lay a thousand miles south of Morocco across "the empty waste" of the Sahara Desert.

When Ibn Battuta returned from China by way of India and the Middle East, he encountered the first outbreak of the bubonic plague, the Black Death, in 1348. Surviving the plague, he made another pilgrimage to Mecca and then headed for home.

Ibn Battuta arrived in Tangier late in 1349. He had been away from home for 24 years. He learned that his mother had died of the plague a few months earlier, and his father had died years before.

At age 45, Ibn Battuta had not yet finished traveling. He crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to tour Granada in southern Spain. This was the last Muslim kingdom left in Spain, which the Christians had been trying to reconquer for several hundred years.

One last part of Dar al-Islam remained that Ibn Battuta had not visited—the West African empire of Mali. It lay a thousand miles south of Morocco across "the empty waste" of the Sahara Desert. In 1352, Ibn Battuta joined a desert caravan headed for Mali on his last great adventure.

The Empire of Mali

Mali was known for its gold and great wealth. The year before Ibn Battuta left home to start his world travels, the Muslim emperor of Mali, Mansa Musa, had made a spectacular appearance in Cairo, Egypt. He was on a *hajj* to Mecca. The royal caravan of the mansa (sultan or king) included thousands of attendants and slaves along with 100 camels loaded with bags of gold. During his stay in Cairo, Mansa Musa spent and gave away so much gold that its market value temporarily fell.

Islam had spread south to Mali many years before. Arabs and Berber peoples from North Africa had begun trading with black Africans around A.D. 800. Soon, large caravans crossed the Sahara, carrying slabs of mined salt to trade for gold in African market towns along the southern border of the forbidding desert. Many Arab and Berber traders gradually settled in these towns as merchants. They were Muslims, and they were the ones who first brought Islam to black Africa.

From their ties with the Muslim merchants, many African rulers and merchants along the lands bordering the Sahara adopted Islam. Most of the common people, though, still held on to their traditional religious beliefs.

Because of the gold trade, several successive empires arose in West Africa south of the Sahara. The Empire of Mali took over this area in the early 1200s and soon adopted Islam as its official religion. Mali included many different African peoples as well as Arab and Berber immigrants. Its gold financed a strong army of bowmen and an armored cavalry. But the real source of Mali's success was its flourishing commerce with Muslim merchants and caravan traders. Africans traded gold, ivory, hides, and slaves for Arab and Berber salt, cloth, paper, and horses. The peak of Mali power and wealth took place under Mansa Musa and his suc-

cessor, Mansa Sulayman whom Ibn Battuta met on his journey.

Ibn Battuta reached the Mali capital in the spring of 1352. He was pleased that the Muslims of Mali strictly observed traditional Islamic practices and had a "zeal for learning the Koran by heart." But he disapproved that the sexes were not segregated as he was accustomed to in other Muslim lands. He wrote that "their women show no bashfulness before men, and do not veil themselves."

Mansa Sulayman largely ignored him and gave him only small gifts, which greatly displeased the famous world traveler. Ibn Battuta did, however, get to witness an audience before Mansa Sulayman in the palace courtyard. The mansa did not speak directly to the people, but only through a spokesman. Ibn Battuta reported, with some disgust, "If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, he uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back . . . like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was [that the people the king spoke to] did not blind themselves."

Timeline of the Life of Ibn Battuta*

1304	Born in Tangier, Morocco.
1325	Left home and went across North Africa.
1326	Arrived in Cairo, Egypt.
1326	Traveled through Syria and Palestine.
1326–1328	Went on a *hajj* to Medina and Mecca.
1328–1331	Sailed down the coast of East Africa, sailed to the Persia Gulf, and returned across land to Mecca.
1332–1333	Went to Asia Minor (Turkey), traveled through Persia and Iraq, and crossed Central Asia.
1333–1341	Reached Delhi, India, and served as a judge.
1342–1345	Trip to China via Maldive Islands, Ceylon, and Malaysia.
1346	Traveled in China.
1346–1349	Returned home via India and the Middle East.
1349–1351	Went to Granada (Spain) and returned home to Morocco.
1352–1353	Traveled through West Africa.
1354	Returned home to Morocco.
1368	Died in Morocco.

*These are approximations. The exact dates of when he was in certain places are unclear.

Ibn Battuta also observed a state ceremony that began with Muslim prayers. But afterward came several dancers, dressed as birds, chanting before the mansa. Ibn Battuta viewed this as an insult to Islam. He did not recognize that the mansa needed to satisfy the common people, most of whom still held on to the old religious beliefs.

Despite his disappointments, Ibn Battuta was impressed that the Mali people "have a greater hatred of injustice than any other people." He related that the mansa showed little mercy to the guilty. "There is complete security in their country," he wrote. "Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence."

City of Scholars

Ibn Battuta left the Mali capital early in 1353, heading down the Niger River for Timbuktu. This city of about 10,000 people was never a military stronghold or seat of a king. Instead, its fame rested on its reputation as a city of scholars.

Timbuktu was founded around 1100 as a market town bordering the Sahara. Almost from the beginning, it seems to have been a Muslim town. It was self-governing until Mansa Musa annexed it without bloodshed to the Mali Empire in 1325. Even after that, the city continued running its own affairs with little control from the Mali kings.

Black African farmers and river people as well as white Arab and Berber merchants populated the city, making it an ethnically mixed settlement. It became known as a place open to newcomers and a city of refuge.

When Ibn Battuta came to Timbuktu in 1353, it was becoming the major center of Islamic learning in black Africa. Because it had a large Muslim population and was also on the pilgrimage route to Mecca, the city drew many Muslim scholars. The sons of wealthy Timbuktu merchant families studied under them to become Islamic scholars, too. They studied Islamic

(Continued on next page)

religion, law, literature, science, and medicine. Islamic books became expensive import items.

Elementary schools, sometimes supported by rich merchants, taught boys to read and memorize the Koran. Most Muslim males, both black and white, learned to read. (Muslim countries at this time normally excluded females from formal schooling.)

Timbuktu reached the height of its influence in the 1500s as part of the Muslim Songhai Empire, which replaced Mali. Many colleges, elementary schools, and libraries flourished in Timbuktu, whose population had grown to about 50,000. All of this became possible because of the leadership and financial contributions of wealthy black and white Muslim merchant families.

Although the Mali and Songhai kings appointed a governor for Timbuktu, the *qadi*, or judge, was the real leader of the community. The most important scholars of the city selected the *qadi* from a few long-established families. The *qadi* had to be a scholar of the law and above suspicion of ever accepting bribes.

The *qadi* heard lawsuits argued by legal scholars, who acted as lawyers for each side of the case. He relied on the testimony of witnesses and other types of evidence presented in his court. He made judgments and ordered punishments, which included beating and imprisonment. He enforced his own decisions, calling on the help of his personal followers or the people of the city. He directed a police force made up of lower-ranking scholars. He also represented the Muslim community when the king came to call.

Occasionally, *qadis* interpreted the law and established precedents. For example, a Timbuktu *qadi* made an important ruling on slaves captured in war. If they claimed that they were Muslims, they had to be given the benefit of doubt and freed. (Islamic law prohibited Muslims enslaving other Muslims.)

"Traveler of the Age"

After visiting with the *qadi*, scholars, and merchants of Timbuktu, Ibn Battuta joined a caravan going north to Morocco. He arrived home early in 1354. This ended his travels to foreign lands. Altogether, he covered about 75,000 miles in 29 years, meeting with 60 rulers in Asia and Africa. He probably had several wives. (Islamic law permitted a man up to four wives at once.)

Like Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta dictated a report of his travels. He then served as the *qadi* of a Moroccan town and disappeared from history. The scribe who wrote down Ibn Battuta's account of his travels added these words: "It is plain to any man of intelligence that this [learned man] is the traveler of the age."

For Discussion and Writing

1. Describe Dar al-Islam. What unified its diverse peoples?
2. How did Timbuktu become a Muslim "city of scholars"?
3. Why do you think Ibn Battuta is important? Explain.

For Further Reading

Dunn, Ross E. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986.

Saad, Elias. *Social History of Timbuktu: The Role of Muslim Scholars and Notables 1400–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

A C T I V I T Y

Medieval Cultures

In the late medieval period, Ibn Battuta traveled through many countries and saw many different cultures. In this activity, students will use their textbooks and other resources to describe the elements of different cultures in the late Middle Ages.

1. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group one of these cultures: China, Mali, India, Japan, Europe.
2. Each group should research and write a one-paragraph description for each of the following elements of their culture: Languages, Law and Government, Education, Warfare, Religion, Slavery, Treatment of Women, Architecture, Food, Transportation, Literature, and Art and Music.
3. Each group should create a chart describing each element and prepare a five-minute presentation to the class on the chart.

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATIO

PostScript

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

New Lessons Available Online: America Responds to Terrorism

Constitutional Rights Foundation has prepared "America Responds to Terrorism," a new series of online lessons and resources designed to help teachers and their students explore and analyze critical national and international issues raised by the terrorist attacks on September 11 and America's response to them. Go to **www.crf-usa.org** and click on "NEW Web Lessons: America Responds to Terrorism." You will find a series of lessons and a huge collection of links. We are constantly developing additional lessons and resources about terrorism. We hope that you will return frequently to www.crf-usa.org and "America Responds to Terrorism" as we continue to augment and update this growing site. Below is one of the new lessons added to the site..

What Is Terrorism?

Since the terrible events of September 11, 2001, with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the subject of terrorism has exploded on the world stage. President George W. Bush has declared a war against terrorism. The vast resources of the United States and other countries have been directed toward ending terrorism in America and around the world. Yet, in spite of these developments, it is clear that countries are not only divided about what to do about terrorism, but even about how to define it.

By its nature, the term "terrorism" is bound up in political controversy. It is a concept with a very negative connotation. Because terrorism implies the killing and maiming of innocent people, no country wants to be accused of supporting terrorism or harboring terrorist groups. At the same time, no country wants what it considers to be a legitimate use of force to be considered terrorism. An old saying goes, "One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter."

Today, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. Countries define the term according to their own beliefs and to support their own national interests. International bodies, when they craft a definition, do so in the interests of their member states. Academics striving to define terrorism are also subject to their own political points of view.

European countries and the United States tend to define terrorism narrowly, making sure that it only applies to acts of non-governmental organizations. For example, Title 22 of the U.S. Code defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence" against "noncombatant targets by subnational groups" usually with the goal to influence an audience.

The U.S. Department of Defense uses a definition that highlights another element of the Western concept of terrorism. Terrorism is "the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally ***political, religious, or ideological.***" In other words, terrorism is violence designed to advance some cause by getting a government to change its policies or political behavior.

Contrast these definitions with one produced by Iranian religious scholar, Ayatulla Taskhiri in a paper delivered at a 1987 international terrorism conference called by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. After a review of Islamic sources concerning terrorism, Taskhiri defined it as follows: "Terrorism is an act carried out to achieve an inhuman and corrupt objective and involving threat to security of any kind, and in violation of the rights acknowledged by religion and mankind."

This is a much broader definition of terrorism. Under this definition, nation states themselves could be guilty of terrorism. Any inhuman or corrupt objective coupled with an act that threatens security and rights regardless of the motivation could be considered terrorism. Later in his paper, Taskhiri accuses the United States of being the "mother of international terrorism" by oppressing peoples, strengthening dictatorships, and supporting the occupation of territories and savage attacks on civilian areas.

The United States would likely reject this definition and Taskhiri's charges and could point out that many states under this definition would also be chargeable with terrorism. Nevertheless, the definition points out the wide gulf in perceptions about what is terrorism and who is guilty of it.

Consider some additional definitions of terrorism.

- "All criminal acts directed against a State intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of par-

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ticular persons or persons in the general public." (League of Nations, 1937)

- "Act of terrorism = Peacetime Equivalent of War Crime." (Alex P. Schmid of the United Nations Office for the Prevention of International Terrorism. He is the author of many books on terrorism, including Terrorism and the Media, 1992.)
- "Terrorism is the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem, and threatening of the innocent to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage, usually to influence an audience." (James M. Poland, professor of criminal justice at California State University, Sacramento. He has written extensively on terrorism and hostage crisis intervention.)

While there is no universal definition of terrorism, various experts point out that there are common elements to most terrorist acts.

Acts of terrorism usually are committed by groups who do not possess the political power to change policies they view as intolerable. Middle Eastern terrorism intensified in the 1970s in response to defeats of Arab nations in wars with Israel over the Palestine issue. Convinced that further wars were futile, a number of countries, including Egypt, sought peace with Israel. This enraged groups within those countries dedicated to the defeat of Israel, who then turned to terrorism.

Terrorists choose targets and actions to maximize the psychological effect on a society or government. Their goal is to create a situation in which a government will change its policies to avoid further bloodshed or disruption. For these reasons, terrorists often choose methods of mass destruction, such as bombings, and target transportation or crowded places to increase anxiety and fear.

Terrorists plan their acts to get as much media exposure as possible. Media coverage magnifies the terrorist act by spreading fear among a mass audience and giving attention to the terrorist cause. The attacks on Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics assured a worldwide television audience, as did crashing planes into the World Trade Center.

Terrorists often justify their acts on ideological or religious grounds arguing that they are responding to a greater wrong or are promoting a greater good. For example, Leon Trotsky, a communist leader during the Russian Revolution, justified the use of terror by the Red Army as a necessary evil to promote the worldwide cause of workers and as a response to the military actions of counterrevolutionaries and Western powers.

For Discussion

1. Why is it difficult to agree upon a universally accepted definition of terrorism?
2. What are the different definitions of terrorism contained in the article? Which definition do you favor? Why?
3. Why does Alex Schmid call a terrorist act the equivalent of a peacetime war crime? Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Is it important to arrive at a universal definition of terrorism? Why or why not?

For Further Reading

The Terrorism Research Center, "The Basics of Terrorism: Part 1," **www.terrorism.com/terrorism/bpart1.html**

Ayatulla Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Taskhiri, "Towards a Definition of Terrorism," **al-islam.org/al-tawhid/definition-terrorism.htm**

United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, "Definitions of Terrorism," **www.odccp.org/terrorism_definitions.html**

Activity

Divide the class into small groups and do the following: Review the various definitions of terrorism contained in the article and choose the best one. Or, review the article and create your own definition of terrorism. Review the following situations, and determine which, if any, are examples of terrorism.

1. A radical environmental group burns a vacant hotel that was recently legally built in a wilderness area.
2. Country X, during a time of war, accidentally kills civilians while conducting bombing raids in Country Z.
3. Country X hires an organized crime group in Country Z to assassinate civilian leaders of a group opposing the international policies of Country X.
4. A national separatist group in Country X blows up a railroad station in Country Z to discourage that government from supporting policies of the government in Country X.

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Grades: 9–12

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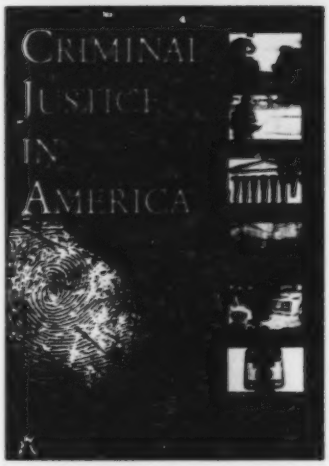

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JEROME C. BYRNE

It is with deep regret that Constitutional Rights Foundation announces the passing of Jerome Byrne. A partner at the Los Angeles firm of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher for more than 40 years, Jerry made a lasting contribution to the practice of law, the people of California, and Constitutional Rights Foundation. CRF sends its sincere condolences to the entire Byrne family and to Jerry's long-term companion, John Beezley.

In 1965, Byrne was commissioned as special counsel to the University of California regents to investigate the crisis stemming from the Free Speech Movement at the Berkeley campus and other problems of unrest within the university system. After a four-month investigation, *The Byrne Report* was issued. The report took an evenhanded approach to assigning responsibility and made recommendations that charted a new course for the University of California system.

In 1967, Byrne joined the board of Constitutional Rights Foundation. He served as president for two years and was chair of CRF's Publications Committee for over 20 years. During his tenure, CRF's publications department expanded from a part-time to a full-time staff and from just a few titles to over 60 today. Jerry took particular interest in *Bill of Rights in Action*. With his leadership, the quarterly curricular newsletter evolved from a small subscription publication to one with a nationwide readership of over 30

thousand. His careful reviews of our publications made immeasurable contributions to improving their quality. In recognition of Byrne's many contributions to the Foundation, in 1995 he received CRF's Lloyd M. Smith Award.

Jerome Byrne's wisdom, commitment, and generosity will be sorely missed.

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